

9-18-1856

## Letter from Thomas G. Clemson to Elias Baker, 1856 September 18

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The Home Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> 1856

My dear Sir

I have just received your favour of the 15<sup>th</sup> inst and I hasten to acknowledge its receipt, but am entirely unable to give you more information than I have given you from time to time. If I did not tell you before - ordered the furniture that the maker was an illiterate man, and an honest man I should have done so. If I did not tell you ~~that~~ - I felt a hesitation in ordering the furniture I should have said so, because of the distance the uncertainty &c. I could not tell you the exact prices because I did not know them & I doubted whether the maker could tell. I told you he was a poor man & could not afford to lay out of funds, as he had to live, support his family & pay his workmen by the day. All these things it appears to me that I have stated to you over and over again, as well by letter as word of mouth. When I have applied to you for funds (not for me, but for yourself) you have put it off & I have been obliged to do some money when I could not afford it. Many articles have been ordered for which he had to pay cash & not included in the first estimate & order - I can mention two at once which cost at least \$500 - I do not really know what more to say about the matter I have written & re-written & finally wrote a friend to inquire into the matter & the answer you saw - I begin to wish that I had

never seen the furniture for every one that looks at  
~~mine~~ wishes me to order for them & I do not wish  
to do any such thing. Because of the time, the distance  
& eventually that must occur before it comes to hand -  
If your friend wants such furniture I do not believe he  
can get it, & certainly not at the prices you have  
given young. I do not feel disposed to make another  
order for any one - nor do I know if it would ever  
be filled at any price. I have almost come to the con-  
clusion to sell that which I have, and get rid of it.  
I do not know that I am at liberty to sell all of it  
because two or three have made me promise if I  
did so, to let them have the refusal of it. One  
person has told me that he would take mine and that  
I might fix what ever price I pleased. I always  
told you that it was costly & that you might perhaps  
get that which to most persons would look equally well at  
a much less figure & I believe now that if you wish to dispose  
of what you have I can get much more than what it costs  
you if not double. If I had the funds to spare I would send out  
four or five hundred dollars for you, as it is I will write again & ask  
what the balance will amount to. I am sure if you had sent  
me the funds as I requested last fall & winter you would have  
received all your furniture by this time. Calhoun is improving  
Frieda is in Phila with her aunt & well. We are well & my  
place is for sale - What will you give me for my furniture  
We are all well. I do not know any thing about the price of

love wood furniture never had any & would not have it. Being a plain unsophisticated man I may be singular in saying that I would much prefer a solid oak or mahogany chair that way true, to the most magnificent rose wood, which is at best a sham. White pine veneered with a papered sheet of rose wood, cracks & falls off with heat, comes away with damps or little water is in fashion (I hate fashion) to day & not worth home wood at any time. If people want such furniture as young they will have wait a long time if they ever get it & when they do - they will have to pay for it. because it is an object of art. is never out of fashion, can not be had as a split bottom chair is had - and becomes more valuable with age. It is to be used and not abused. & is I should say much too fine for the uncultivated taste of the Western rose wood or Mahogany would suit that market perhaps just as well. Because to the majority of the people in that country their imagination never conceived any thing of the kind & they would stand aghast when they would be informed of the time it requires to make such a chair or table & would consider it sacrilege to give such prices for that which answering no better a purpose than to sit down upon or place in a room. A fifty-cent chair or a five dollar table would answer the same end. I have not yet received all the prices I ordered

three or four years ago, but if Mr Lewis will buy  
a portion of what I have here & that which is to  
come - I have no objections to sell it. Before I get  
a home to put it in I may be dead. -

I am entirely cured of farming & will sell my place as  
soon as I can (& that is just the reason why I have con-  
cluded that it would be better to sell my furniture)  
if I do not sell it before long it will I am afraid  
be sold for me - My farm is very much like buying  
a pew in a church. Buy it first & then pay for keeping it  
I can buy all that I raise much cheaper than I can raise  
them - Besides the worry is interminable - I can not afford it.

Our little one has been sick for the last few days. But  
is now better. I heard through a friend (Mr Lee) of  
a York who is with Dr. Maudslayi that Culhoun was improving  
rapidly. The day before he wrote Culhoun had walked  
to and from the Connecticut river on a fishing excursion  
(ten miles) without fatigue. He eats well, sleeps well  
& does not complain much of pain.

I am building a home for my father & can not leave home  
until I go on to Falmouth to see Culhoun & if he be well  
enough to bring him home.

Anna joins in kind remembrance to Aunt Elizabeth - With  
-

Yours affectionately

Henry C. Benson

Phy Baker Esq